

## **7430 – Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Services - Best Practice Recommendations:**

- The initial IVR system greeting should inform users that they may reach an attendant by pressing zero. Because the IVR can be reached twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, instructions should include times when an attendant will be available. For example: "Hello. You have reached the Cabinet of XYZ. An attendant can be reached between the hours of 8AM-5PM, Monday through Friday, Eastern Time by pressing zero." An attendant should always be available during the announced hours to respond to these calls.
- When these systems are used, the calling pattern of incoming calls must be mapped and analyzed to determine the most frequent call reasons. In setting up the automated responses, the most frequent call reasons should be given call option one. For example, if the most frequent call reason is hours of operation, then choice one should be for hours of operation. This will resolve the majority of calls with the first option and not require the caller to hang on listening to several other choices.
- The agency's web site address should be communicated, where it would provide users with helpful, additional information. The address should be given slowly and clearly.
- Greetings and options should be short and concise, and recorded in a straightforward manner. Long agency names should be avoided.
- IVR devices present users with an array of options which, when selected, take users to a secondary range of more specific options. These are called calling trees. In general, calling trees should include no more than four options at each level, and should be no deeper than three levels. The smaller the number of selection choices the better. A larger number of options and/or levels increase the likelihood that users will become frustrated and abandon calls. In all cases, a means of returning to the top level of the tree should be provided.
- Separate lines must be installed to the IVR that the public can be given the numbers to call.